

Message Text

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TEXT OF SPEECH DELIVERED BY GENERAL TORROJOS OF PANAMA
TO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT CONFERENCE AUGUST 17:

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: NAM SUMMIT: GENERAL TORRIJOS' SPEECH

DISTINGUISHED MRS. PRESIDENT,
HEADS OF STATES:

MY INTERVENTION WILL BE A VERY SHORT ONE. I WILL
TELL YOU A VERY HUMAN AND A THIRD WORLD ANECDOTE
WITH A GREAT CONTENT OF LIBERATION PHILOSOPHY IN
WHICH PARTICIPATE PEOPLE THAT ARE PRESENT HERE OR
THAT ARE RELATED WITH US. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE
THAT HAVE DRIVEN US TO PARTICIPATE TOGETHER WITH
YOU IN THIS SUMMIT CONFERENCE.

EIGHT YEARS AGO, A GROUP OF YOUNGOFFICERS (I WAS YOUNG
THEN) SEIZED POWER IN PANAMA WITH THE FIRM PROPOSAL OF
ABOLISHING FROM OUR COUNTRY THE CAUSES OF UNHAPPINESS
TO WHICH WE WERE SUBJECTED BY CORRUPT POLITICIANS. IN
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THIS WAY WE BEGAN OUR REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT, WITH THE

BEST MINDS OF THE COUNTRY.

THE GREATEST REASON FOR UNHAPPINESS IN OUR COUNTRY, WHICH STILL EXISTS, IS THE PRESENCE OF A COLONIAL ENCLAVE, 1432 SQUARE KILOMETERS, LOCATED IN THE HEART OF OUR HOMELAND WITH THE PRETEXT OF OPERATING THE PANAMA CANAL. PANAMA, A 77,082 SQUARE KILOMETERS CENTRAL AMERICAN ISTHMUS WITH A MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE IS THE COUNTRY THAT ALLOWED ITSELF TO BE SPLIT OPEN IN ITS HEART TO HELP WORLD COMMERCE BY FACILITATING SHIPS TO CROSS FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC IN EIGHT HOURS TIME.

THE UNITED STATES, THE COUNTRY THAT OCCUPIES THIS GEOGRAPHICAL WAIST WITH FOURTEEN MILITARY INSTALLATIONS HAS ITS OWN ARROGANT AND AGGRESSIVE POLICE, ITS OWN LEGAL AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, COMMISSARIES, U.S. POST OFFICES, ETC. ALL FOR THE BENEFIT OF FIFTYTHOUSAND PRIVILEGED, ISOLATED BEHIND A FENCE, THAT BY HAVING BEEN BORN IN THAT ENCLAVE HAVE U.S. NATIONALITY AND ARE THE OWNERS AND BENEFICIARIES OF THE TRANSIT THROUGH THE CANAL.

OUR COUNTRY USED TO RECEIVE A MILLION NINE HUNDRED AND THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS ANNUAL RENT. THIS RENT HAS BEEN RELINQUISHED BY OUR PEOPLE BECAUSE OUR DIGNITY IS NOT FOR RENT.

IN 1903 PANAMA BECAME INDEPENDENT FROM COLOMBIA AND WE ASKED THE U.S. HELP TO DEFEND OUR NEW BORN STATE. THIS FOREIGN POWER GAVE US HELP BUT RESERVED FOR THEMSELVES THE STRATEGIC WAIST THEREBY USURPING OUR SOVEREIGN RIGHTS. OUR STRUGGLE HAS BEEN LONG AND THE SOCIAL COST PAID BY OUR PEOPLE HAS BEEN HIGH SINCE IT IS ALWAYS TRUE THAT THE POWERFUL HAVE THE FIREPOWER AND THE WEAK THE DEAD TOLL.

SINCE COLONIALISM HAS NO LEGAL JUSTIFICATION, THEY CLAIM A RIGHT, LIKE THE ONE THAT THEY THINK BELONGS TO THE MIDWIFE OF TAKING AWAY THE BABY IF NOT PAID FOR THE DELIVERY.

THE INDIGNATION OF OUR HUMILIATED PEOPLE EXPLODED ON JANUARY 9TH 1964 WHEN, ARMED WITH COURAGE AND PATRIOTISM IT MARCHED PEACEFULLY TO RAISE OUR FLAG IN THE CANAL ZONE.

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THERE WERE MANY DEAD, THE CITIES OF PANAMA AND COLON WERE OCCUPIED BY THE U.S. TROOPS AND OUR PANAMANIAN MOTHERS, WIVES AND CHILDREN WERE OFFENDED IN THEIR OWN LAND. THIS MADE US REBUILD SILENTLY OUR ARMED FORCES AND FOUR YEARS LATER, UNDER THE COMMAND OF THEN MAJOR TORRIJOS WE SEIZED POWER AND WE SWORE TO OUR HOMELAND THAT IF OUR GENERATION HAD TO DIE TO FREE THE NEXT ONE, WE WOULD DO IT, BUT THIS TIME WE WOULD CHOOSE THE TIME

AND PLACE FOR COMBAT. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES CAME INTO OUR LIFE ONE OF THE BRAVEST AND MOST DIGNIFIED MEN THAT HAS LIVED IN THIS CENTURY; JOSIP BROZ TITO. WE BEGAN TO STUDY HIS LIFE AND HIS STRUGGLES AND WE CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IF THIS MAN HAD DEFEATED THE FOREIGN TROOPS THAT INVADED HIS COUNTRY, THROWING THEM OUT, EVERY ONE OF OUR TEN THOUSAND SOLDIERS COULD BECOME A JOSIP BROZ. SIMILARLY, WE STUDIED THE ALGIERS LIBERATION MOVEMENT. HERE A YOUNG MAN, HOUARI BOUMEDIENNE, STARTED WITH 67 ALGERIAN PATRIOTS AND ALSO FOUGHT AND DEFEATED THE FOREIGN DIVISIONS. HO CHIN MINH, GANDHI, NEHRU, NASSER, KENYATTA, THEY HAVE ALL DEMONSTRATED TO US THAT WHEN THE PEOPLE ARE DETERMINED TO UNDERTAKE A LIBERATION PROCESS, SOONER OR LATER THEY OBTAIN THEIR LIBERTY, BECAUSE THE WEAPON THAT CAN KILL AN IDEAL HAS NOT YET BEEN DISCOVERED.

ONE AFTERNOON IN AUGUST, 1972, AFTER AN AIRPLANE, AUTOMOBILE AND BOAT TRIP, I AM ADVISED BY A STAFF COLONEL, COME IN GENERAL, MARSHALL TITO AWAITS YOU. WHEN I SAW MYSELF IN BRIONI FACING JOSIP BROZ, I FELT DIMINISHED, UNARTICULATED (SIC) EMOTIONALLY BLOCKED. I WAS NOT FACING A LEADER, I WAS FACING LIVING HISTORY. AFTER DINNER HOSTED BY TITO, AND HIS WIFE JOVANKA, AND WHEN I TOLD HIM THAT I ONLY HAD TWO ALTERNATIVES TO LIBERATE MY COUNTRY: THE GANDHI ROUTE OR THAT ONE OF HO CHI MINH, AND SINCE I DID NOT HAVE THE PACIFIST VIRTUES OF MAHATMA, I WAS DECIDING FOR THOSE OF THE VIETNAMESE HERE, HE ANSWERED ME NOT AS A LEADER BUT AS A FATHER: LOOK YOUNG PRESIDENT, THERE NOW EXISTS PEACEFUL WAYS THAT DID NOT EXIST IN MY TIME, CAPABLE OF ABOLISHING COLONIALISM. HAVE FAITH, I WILL HELP YOU, AND PROMISE ME YOU WILL NOT INCUR ANY EMOTIONAL EXCESS. THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT IS THE ORGANIZATION

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THAT BY ITS OWN NATURE WILL SOLVE YOUR PROBLEM WITHOUT SOCIAL COST. THAT IS WHY WE ARE HERE NOW, AS FULL MEMBERS OF THE MOVEMENT ASKING YOUR SUPPORT FOR A DECLARATION PRESENTED BY ALL MEMBER COUNTRIES FROM LATIN AMERICA.

WHEN WE RECEIVED THE CONSENSUS OF THIS SUMMIT, MY PEOPLE WILL BE FILLED WITH FAITH AND HOPE IN ORDER TO TAKE OUR CAUSE TO THE UNITED NATIONS.

BUT BEFORE I FINISH, I WANT TO TELL OUR BROTHERS FROM AFRICA THAT WHENEVER THE UNITED NATIONS ORDERS A WAR MISSION OUR FORCES WILL BE PRESENT TO THROW FROM POWER THOSE MINORITIES IN RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA. WE KNOW ABOUT APARTHEID BECAUSE IT IS PRECISELY RACIAL DISCRIMINATION THE MOST SHAMEFUL ASPECT WITHIN THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA THAT DIVIDES OUR COUNTRY IN TWO.

THANK YOU, VERY MUCH.
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